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RECENT THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE.

LA CRÉATION ET LA PROVIDENCE DEVANT LA SCIENCE MODERNE.

Par EUGÈNE MAILLET, Docteur ès lettres, ancien professeur de philosophie au lycée Louis-le-Grand. (Mémoire couronné par l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques.) Paris: Librairie Hachette et C^{ie}, 1897. Pp. xii + 463. Fr. 7.50.

THE subject treated by Professor Maillet in this volume has engaged the attention of able metaphysicians and theologians for a long time, and is not likely to lose its interest while there are thoughtful men under the sun. The writer was a professor of philosophy, and his treatment of the subject chosen furnishes abundant evidence of familiarity with both ancient and modern philosophy. It also proves his acquaintance with the principal facts established by modern science and supposed to have a bearing on creation and providence. He is classed with eclectic philosophers, and his purpose in the present work was to effect a reconciliation between faith and science. The volume has been given to the public by his friends after his death, but without making use of a book of notes which he had accumulated since his work was crowned by the Academy in 1891. Whether these notes suggest any modification of his views in respect to creation and providence is not stated, but we are told that they were not left in a condition to be used by anyone except their author.

The style of the volume is good, though there are sentences, perhaps few in number, less perspicuous than is common with the best French writers. Ordinarily the language is perfectly lucid and characterized by a sober dignity befitting the subject. *Part first* treats of the present state of questions pertaining to theodicy, and in a succession of chapters describes the actual situation of theodicy in presence of theology and science respectively, and in particular the present state of theodicy on the question of the religious sentiment, on the questions of nature and of the existence of God, on the problem of creation, on the problem of providence, and on the question of the good and the evil of life. *Part second* surveys in a rapid way the principal systems of theodicy; the two dialectics, that of theism and that of pantheism;

providence in Greek religion and Greek philosophy, in some purely theistic doctrines, in pantheism; creation and providence in Christian metaphysics. *Part third* treats of consciousness as the basis of a possible view of the relations of God and the world; inductions from consciousness, both theological and metaphysical; providence in nature, in history, and in religion.

Professor Maillet's theory of the harmony between creation and providence and modern science is most clearly defined in the last part of his work. He understands consciousness to be the activity of the essential being. It embraces all personal action, indeed all selfhood. It covers the whole psychological life, and, in virtue of the finality concealed in it, is the moving principle of all its action. "That which is only true in a representative form in the development of human consciousness becomes true in an absolute manner in the evolution of the divine consciousness. (For God to think is to posit real being.) Yet the evolution of the divine consciousness is not chronological, it is simply logical. And as the 'first moment' of consciousness in man contains an image of creation, the 'first moment' of consciousness in God contains the reality of creation." Again, "God is not a being, infinite, perfect, supremely wise, supremely good, and, still more, *a person*; he is *a person* whose action contains and produces, in an order purely logical and under the character of eternity, the infinitude, the perfection, the plenitude of goodness, of righteousness, and of all his other attributes. From this point of view, and from no other, can Strauss be refuted."

Maillet holds that there is a "soul of truth" in the doctrine that we can see the Absolute in matter or in nature. For the Absolute in producing matter made it, in a certain sense, after his own image; for he deposited in it the ideal possibility of all things. It may be defined as a *negative residue* of the Absolute. That it is not continuous has been shown experimentally by Tyndall and rationally by Janet. It may be defined, not as *force*, but as *resistance*, that is, persistence in being once received, or as *inertia*, that is, persistence in movement once imparted. On the other hand, nature may be defined as *force*; for it has, so to speak, deposited in its forms, its laws, its continuity of being and of action, the connection of its phenomena, and its infinite tendency to progress, the force of the Absolute. It is not God, but in it and through it the thought and will of God are realized. After a discussion of the nature of space and time, Maillet summarizes his conclusions in these words: "The first moment of the divine consciousness

creates space, by creating the absolute dissemination of pure matter; the second moment of the same consciousness creates time, by giving the first impulse to nature's movement, by creating the necessity of a universal flight of things toward the good, or life and progress. As to God, he subsists outside of space and of time, in his own immutable eternity, centered in himself. 'All comes from him, all abides in him, all returns to him,' but without any mingling, as pantheism wrongly believes, with the impassible unity of the divine substance."

Under the head of providence in nature the author says: "We do not believe that the determinism of nature ought to be considered strictly rigid or purely mechanical. Nature has its free hand. This does not mean that it is disorderly or that the law of causality sometimes fails. It means that the law by which nature binds a consequent to an antecedent phenomenon is a law that has made itself under the influence of the idea which dominates it, the end which directs it. In this law there is the life of nature, and with this life the spontaneity, the suppleness, the plasticity which are characteristic of life in all its forms. This is what a contemporary philosopher has expressed by a remarkable formula when he speaks of *the contingency of the laws of nature*. We believe that nature is in a process of evolution and progress, and that for this reason its laws are in movement."

In history there are two forces at work: on the one hand, divine action, working after the law of final causes; and, on the other, human action, the concurrence of free wills working according to the law of efficient causes. As Vico teaches, in *The New Science*, "God does not substitute his own rational volitions for the capricious volitions of men; but, through the profound laws which he has established, he acts upon their volitions to make them enter into the current of his designs, and bends them, as efficient causes, to the realization of a system of finalities." In other words, God does not directly create our thoughts and acts; he moves upon our souls by way of influence, not of constraint. Human freedom is never violated, yet by a sort of divine persuasion men are led to accomplish his purpose. "One will perhaps object that, if the action of providence upon human affairs is reduced to this influence of *persuasion* which is wholly inner, wholly moral, human volitions, being free, would all resist the same and the moving principle of the moral world thus be totally suppressed. But this is a gratuitous hypothesis, resting on the chimera of a liberty absolutely indifferent."

These citations and statements suggest the theory of divine provi-

dence advocated by Professor Maillet. It leaves small place for miracles, though it does not expressly deny the possibility of them. While, therefore, his theory, elaborated so fully and connected at so many points with religious speculation in the past, explains satisfactorily the general course of events as dependent upon both divine and human action, it does not cope with all the difficulties which present themselves to the mind of a believer in Christ. Religion is thought to be the product of divine condescension and of human aspiration, having reached its highest form in Christianity; but just how the person and work of Jesus Christ are interpreted by the author is not perfectly clear.

ALVAH HOVEY.

THE NEWTON THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION.

DIE KLASSISCHE POESIE UND DIE GÖTTLICHE OFFENBARUNG.
Von D. JULIUS DISSELHOFF. Kaiserswerth a. Rh.: Verlag
der Diakonissen-Anstalt, 1898. Pp. vii + 562. M. 7.50.

THIS posthumous work of a thoroughly competent writer deserves an English translation. It is a contribution to comparative religion, rather than to pure literature. Poetry, as "the mother-tongue of the human race," the author would say, expresses, more completely than either history or philosophy, man's conceptions of reality. Dealing, therefore, with the substance, and not the form, of poetry, he would discover in it the actual attitude of man toward God. In classical poetry, including the poetry of the Iranian and Indian peoples, as well as of the Greeks and Romans, he traces a gradual decline from the early idea of a personal God, above the world and distinct from the world, to that of a God who is scarcely more than the personified elements of nature. Side by side with this growing deterioration in the conception of God he sees a deterioration in the conception of man. Man, too, loses his sense of personality, freedom, responsibility, and can only mourn his bondage to evil, while he sees no power either in himself or in God to deliver him from it.

The lesson drawn from this historical survey is that man needs a special divine revelation. The Gathas of Zarathustra maintain man's spiritual and moral nature, but at the price of losing unity in a thoroughgoing dualism. The author makes no mention of Rhys Davids' contention that the divine Being in the Avesta was originally one, and that "the twins," good and evil, were simply opposing principles of